OPRAH WAS HERE
(and we’re still feeling the magic!)
Of all the places on campus you’d expect to find a garden brimming with kale, Swiss chard and collard greens, the second floor of University Crossing probably isn’t one. But thanks to a collaboration between the university and Lowell-based urban farming nonprofit Mill City Grows, there’s a new rooftop vegetable garden outside the windows of the busy second-floor landing at the student and administrative center. UML’s hope is that the space helps educate passersby about the university’s Urban Agriculture Program. A wall sign provides details about the “Green Roof” garden and other urban agriculture sites around campus. Producing fresh, leafy vegetables for the university community is an added bonus.
A Message
FROM THE CHANCELLOR

It’s been several months, but we’re still basking in the glow of Oprah Winfrey’s visit to campus. You can read all about it starting on page 34, in our behind-the-scenes look at what it took to host one of the most influential and respected women in the world. I am so grateful to the entire UMass Lowell community for your support of this once-in-a-lifetime event for the university. A special thanks goes to the team that managed this historic occasion.

We were truly stunned when Oprah announced her plan to match the revenue we raised for student scholarships through sponsorships and ticket sales. She was clearly touched by our university, our community and our mission. As she said that evening, “Education is the only way to change lives.” Well, she certainly won the hearts and minds of those in attendance, and her impact will be felt here for years.

The rest of this issue of the UML Magazine is packed with stories about the good work being done by our campus community, from students and faculty to alumni and partners. For example, I hope you feel the same pride as I did when you read about the critical role our UMass Lowell alumni had in the recovery of the gas disaster in the Merrimack Valley; see more on page 20.

As we start our 125th academic year (watch for a special anniversary issue of this magazine next spring!), I’m confident the UMass Lowell community will continue to find new ways to triumph and surprise people. Turn the page to see how we already are!

Sincerely,
Jacquie Moloney ’75, ’92
When Barry Perry ’68, ’15 (H) was a plastics engineering student, the buildings on North Campus still housed machinery used to train students for careers in the textile industry. Perry says he can still hear the thrum of the machines and conjure up the humidity that hung in the air, and how it felt against his skin.

He was back on campus in April to celebrate the grand reopening of Perry Hall, the North Campus building where future generations of engineers will prepare for careers in such emerging disciplines as biomanufacturing and clean energy.

The building was closed for over 18 months to undergo a $50 million renovation. Perry, a longtime supporter of research, academics and scholarships at UML, helped set the work in motion with a $1.25 million gift in 2012.

“It’s a great honor for our family to give this type of opportunity to students,” said Perry, who began his career at General Electric before becoming chairman and CEO of New Jersey-based Engelhard Corp.

Known as the Engineering Building when it opened in 1952, Perry Hall has long been a hub of research and innovation. The building had become dated, however, and a 2012 fire forced the closure of the fourth floor. The renovation included a total reconstruction of the interior.

The new space features labs for teaching and research in biomedical, chemical and environmental engineering, biomanufacturing and clean energy, as well as room to support expanding industry partnerships.

GOATS ARE THE NEW G.O.A.T.S?

Goats are all the rage lately—from goat yoga and goat therapy to goat parties—and UML is nothing if not on trend. A few days before finals week kicked off in May, the university’s student wellness team staged a baby animal petting zoo as part of Stress Relief Day.

Hundreds of students stopped by to scratch ears and snuggle fur. “Aw, he’s sooooo cute!” was heard approximately 8,943 times.

WEB EXTRA: Check out Callahan’s whole Gen Z dictionary at uml.edu/magazine.
Office Hours

A peek into some of the most interesting faculty and staff offices on campus

WIND: Larry Siegel is vice chancellor for student affairs and university events. Thirty years ago, he was hired as the university’s first director of residence life. Now he oversees all of the fun stuff involving student life, from Convocation to Commencement—and some of the not-so-fun stuff, like student discipline.

WHERE: A corner office on the second floor of University Crossing that overlooks the Merrimack River toward North Campus.

THE FUN STUFF: A shadow wall cabinet over a whiteboard opens to reveal three neat columns of dollar bills, $5 bills and a couple of higher denominations—in all, 41 bills totaling $134—mounted on the back of one door. All the bills are signed by people at the university who lost bets to Siegel. “I don’t care about the money. It’s just fun,” he says.

So who’s the biggest loser? Jim Canning, who wagered and lost $50. “I bet them they were going to change the Honors Program to the Honors College and that he would be named the inaugural dean. He said, ‘No way!’” That was in 2015, and Canning has been dean of the Honors College since later that same year.

The bills have also been a target of practical jokes. “One alumn who had two bills up there took all the bills off, hid them in an envelope in my office and then started sending me ransom notes, followed by clues. I finally found the envelope taped to the underside of a drawer.”

THE HISTORICAL STUFF: A decade ago, when Siegel and his crew were figuring out where to put a new Starbucks on North Campus, he was scouring the basement of the Lydon Library stacks when he discovered a treasure trove of water-stained, curled-up documents. “They were literally behind a boiler on the floor,” he says.

He salvaged and framed three of them, including two related to his work with Residence Life. One is June 5, 1946 photo of Gov. Maurice J. Tobin, surrounded by university officials, signing a bill allowing Lowell Textile Institute to build dormitories. The other is a June 5, 1946 photo of Gov. Maurice J. Tobin, surrounded by university officials, signing a bill allowing Lowell Textile Institute to build dormitories. The restored blackboards are now hanging in the basement of Dugan Hall, available for use by art students and faculty. An illustrator and photographer, Dugan has built a budding business working in chalk, creating designs for restaurants, salons and other clients. During her visit, she also spoke to students about life as a working artist. See her work on Instagram: “annadidathing.”

Friends in Business

Kronos CEO Aron Ain (pictured at right, with Chancellor Jacqueline Moloney) may be one of UMass Lowell’s biggest fans. Ain, who leads the $1.4 billion workforce management software company, had high praise for the university at an event this spring celebrating UMass’s partnership with businesses. Kronos and Raytheon were honored as the university’s top two industry partners. “I tell other CEOs in the Boston area that Kronos won’t compete with them for MIT and Harvard graduates. We don’t need to—we have UMass Lowell,” Ain told the crowd. Kronos has endowed scholarships and maintains internships and co-op programs for UML students. In turn, the university provides a pipeline of talent for the company, which has hired as many as 300 UML graduates. “Without UMass Lowell, we wouldn’t be as successful as we are,” Ain said.

CHALK TALK

Anna Dugan ’13, a graduate of the Art & Design program, was invited back to campus to be the first artist to render chalk designs on two of the historic slate blackboards (circa 1897) that were uncovered during the renovation of Coburn Hall. The restored blackboards are now hanging in the basement of Dugan Hall, available for use by art students and faculty. An illustrator and photographer, Dugan has built a budding business working in chalk, creating designs for restaurants, salons and other clients. During her visit, she also spoke to students about life as a working artist. See her work on Instagram: “annadidathing.”

New Website Documents History of Immigration in Lowell

It will soon be much easier to research the paths of immigrants who arrived in Lowell, thanks to a project spearheaded by History Prof. Robert Forrant and Asst. Prof. Kari Ingemanson of Art & Design.

With the help of a team of UML students, they have gathered and curated hundreds of photographs, videos and essays, building a unique website that is designed to make it easier for teachers, students, academics and researchers to access a historically significant part of Lowell’s DNA—the arrivals of waves of immigrants calling the city their new home.

The professors’ efforts recently got a boost with a $12,500 grant from Mass Humanities, an independent programming and funding organization. The website, which will be called the Library of New England Immigration, will be officially unveiled in the coming months and will be part of the UMass Lowell Library’s online resources. Initially, it will focus on Lowell immigration, especially over the past 50 years, but it will broaden to include all of New England over time, says Forrant.

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Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, far right, and Chancellor Jacquie Moloney tour the UMass Lowell campus.

The first thing she said was, “Thank you for taking time to come see us from the hospital after she got out of surgery.”

Creating helped a person during a very difficult time in his life. A product you poured your heart and soul into making arrived within minutes.

She had been gifted weeks before and crews couldn’t reach 911, due to connection problems. The invisaWear charm that Valdina pushed was the one that could reach 911.

“I was praying to God not to die.” No one who stopped to help was injured, Jenelle Valdina says she was “praying that someone would come.”

When she graduated with a double major in electrical engineering and computer science at UMass Lowell, going on to business partner Raymond Hamilton Jr. had already secured thousands of dollars for the company the pair started while students. She turned down impressive job offers (sorry, Google) to continue to grow her startup invisaWear. The company makes smart necklaces, bracelets and keychains whose panic-button technology can save lives—women aren’t as visible as men. But the ugly panic button—and, frankly, too ugly for even my grandmother to want to wear. I had been working on wearable technology that can save lives—like that of a woman involved in a car crash on the Lowell Connector in February. Seriously injured, Jenelle Valdina says she was “praying to God not to die.”

“You know you need to do this? You knew you needed to do this?”

The River Hawks proved that they belong, both artistically and academically, in their second full year of being eligible for NCAA Division I competition. Paul Hogan ‘19 became the first UML track athlete to earn All-America status by finishing 11th in the 10,000-meter race at the NCAA Championships in Austin, Texas.

The softball team won its first-ever America East regular season crown with a 16-3 conference mark. And the men’s soccer team reached No. 15 in the national rankings and returned to the semifinals of the AE tournament.

Research Links

Egg-heavy Diet with Health Trouble

Loading up on triple-egg omelets on a regular basis may not be the best choice for your health, according to new research co-authored by Prof. Katherine Tucker of the Department of Biomedical and Nutritional Sciences in the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences.

“Eggs may be good and bad for you, depending on how many you consume,” Tucker says. “Eggs include a lot of healthy nutrients, like antioxidants that protect your eyes and vitamin D that protects your bones. But if you eat too many, then you may be at higher risk of heart disease.”

Tucker was a co-author, with researchers at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, on a study published in the March issue of the medical journal JAMA that found that the more eggs an individual consumes, the greater the risk for heart disease, stroke and overall mortality.

“Eating several eggs a week is reasonable, but I recommend that people avoid eating three-egg omelets every day,” says Tucker. “Nutrition is all about moderation and balance.”
The Future’s So Bright, They Gotta Wear Shades

When you’re one of the fastest-growing public doctoral universities in the country, Commencement can’t be confined to just one day. For the first time in university history, UMass Lowell held three Commencement ceremonies this year—one for Ph.D. and master’s students, and two for undergraduate students the following day. The expanded ceremonies helped accommodate UML’s largest graduating class ever—more than 4,500 students—and the thousands of guests who celebrated their achievements at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell. If the Class of 2018 is an indication, the achievements will keep coming for their successors. Within six months of last year’s graduation, 96 percent of the class was either working or enrolled in graduate school.

### Commencement 2019
#### BY THE NUMBERS

- **3** Commencement Ceremonies
- **4,500+** Diplomas handed out
- **695** Students with the most popular major, business administration
- **$116,500** Amount raised for student emergency funds at the annual Commencement Eve Celebration
- **113** Countries our new grad represents
- **18,000** Guests at ceremonies
- **17,180** Total views of the three ceremonies’ livestreams across 10 countries.
- **10,035** The number of likes, shares, and comments on UML’s Commencement Facebook, Instagram and Twitter posts
- **4,000** Infinity—Number of high-fives given by Rowdy the River Hawk
- **100+** Number of students who graduated with a perfect 4.0 GPA

### Professor Aims to Solve Mercury Mystery

The National Science Foundation has awarded a three-year, $873,000 grant to a research project led by Prof. Daniel Obrist, chairman of the Department of Earth, Environmental and Atmospheric Sciences, to study mercury pollution in forests. Mercury gets deposited in forests through rainfall and vegetation uptake—a process, what Obrist describes as a “vegetation pump” process and to take direct measurements of the mercury uptake at two sites—Harvard University Forest in Petersham, Mass., and the Texas A&M Soltis Center farm in central Costa Rica.

According to Obrist, measurements are especially limited in polluted areas or for data gathered for short periods of time. “Our goal is to study mercury in the plant atmosphere with mercury in the air, and also for one full year each, providing the first such records in forests,” he says. Understanding the distribution of mercury is important because the heavy metal is a highly neurotoxic environmental pollutant that threatens fish, birds, mammals and humans worldwide.

### U.S. Mint Launches Lowell Quarter—with UML’s Help

If she was lucky, a Lowell mill girl earned two quarters for a day of hard labor. Now, their part in the American story is memorialized on a special edition of the U.S. quarter. The coin, part of the “America the Beautiful” series, bears a design on its flip side of the Lowell National Historical Park. A ceremony in February to unveil the coin, which features an early 1900s mill girl loading a loom’s bobbin battery, drew hundreds of schoolchildren, educators, public officials and representatives of the university, the National Park Service and the Mint. The Lowell quarter was the culmination of a decade’s worth of work by Ellen Anstey ’08, manager of administration and engagement at the Tsongas Industrial History Center (TIHC), a partnership between UMass Lowell’s College of Education and Lowell National Historical Park.

“Quarter designs show the importance of place,” says Anstey. “They’re also an educational tool.” The Mint used lesson plans that TIHC staff developed to create a resource booklet and website for teachers. Lowell National Historical Park was selected for the coin by popular vote via an online ballot, beating dozens of other federal sites around the state, including Boston’s Freedom Trail, Concord’s Minute Man National Historical Park and the Cape Cod National Seashore.
WAY TO STEP UP, ALUMNI!

During the university’s third annual Days of Giving, donors didn’t just exceed expectations—they roared past them. On April 9-10, over 3,300 members of the UML community—including students, faculty, staff, alumni, family members and friends—made contributions online and at regional events, raising a record $420,500 for their favorite programs, colleges, clubs and sports teams. About 1,100 alumni were responsible for over a third of that—marking a 50 percent bump in the number of alumni who participated, as compared to last year. Support was particularly strong for student scholarships. Athletics also scored a big win with its challenge to attract 425 donations—one for each of the university’s 425 Division I athletes. When the buzzer sounded, more than 1,000 donors had given to different sports teams and to the Costello Gym renovation campaign, earning an additional $25,000 in challenge funds.

SIX FORMER RIVER HAWKS GONE PRO

Six former River Hawks, including four new graduates, have signed professional hockey contracts. Defender Ani Barilsha and co-captain forward Connor Wilson both signed with the Mulhouse Scorpions of the French Synergique Ligue Magnus. They will play for former UML forward and two-time captain Yorick Treille ’02, the Scorpions’ head coach. Senior forwards Ryan Dmowski and Nick Master signed contracts with the Hartford Wolf Pack (AHL) and the Maine Mariners (ECHL), respectively. Junior co-captain Ryan Lohin and Junior alternate captain Mattias Göransson chose to forgo their final seasons in Lowell to sign with the NHL’s Tampa Bay Lightning and Leksands IF in the Swedish Hockey League, respectively.

From left: Nick Master, Mattias Göransson, Ryan Dmowski, Ani Barilsha, Ryan Lohin and Connor Wilson

She’s Got the Beat

Recent graduate Maddie May Scott took her powerhouse drumming skills to the high seas with Melissa Etheridge’s star-studded spring cruise. Scott and her band, Flight of Fire, were invited to perform on the eight-day trip. A double major in music and languages (Spanish and French), Scott has kept the beat for the Boston-based hard rock band for the past two years. The Norwegian Cruise Line event featured performances by Etheridge, Shawn Colvin, Jill Sobule, Dar Williams, Joan Osborne, Lillie Mae and other well-known performers. For Scott, the gig was “a dream come true.” Winner of Best Live Act award at the New England Music Awards last year, Flight of Fire has opened for such artists as Bon Jovi, J. Geils Band and Fitz and the Tantrums.
NURSING STUDENTS WORK WITH COMMUNITIES ON ANTI-VAPING EFFORTS

Nursing students teamed up with local schools and public health officials in an effort to snuff out the growing epidemic of teen vaping. As part of their course work, the students researched and developed anti-vaping campaigns.

Across the United States, vaping is surging among young people. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the proportion of high school seniors who reported recent vaping of nicotine jumped to 20.9 percent in 2018, up from 11 percent in 2017. In December 2018, the Office of the Surgeon General declared vaping a health epidemic.

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products. Studies show that nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain—which continues to develop until about age 25. It can impact learning, memory and attention.

The nursing students gave presentations on the harmful effects of vaping to high school students and parents and created posters and fliers for distribution.

“We are able to relate to the students, since we’re not that much older than they are. We understand the temptations and peer pressure, so our hope is that they will hear us and either don’t start vaping or stop,” says nursing student Joseph Bradstreet.

UML AND STATE CELEBRATE $1.2M IN ENERGY SAVINGS

Some of the energy-saving measures, like the 600-panel solar array atop the South Campus parking garage, are impossible to miss. Others, like occupancy sensors to control lighting in O’Leary and Lydon Libraries, are much more discreet.

But big and small, they’re all part of the university’s recently completed $23.1 million Accelerated Energy Program, an ambitious three-year initiative designed to make the campus more energy-efficient while reducing its carbon footprint.

Four years to the day after announcing the program, officials from UML and the state’s Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance marked its completion at a Earth Day celebration at University Crossing.

As the state’s largest Accelerated Energy Program site to date, the university implemented more than 100 energy-saving measures in 30 buildings across campus over the last three years. More than 6,000 pieces of mechanical equipment and lighting were updated or replaced, including the installation of a new solar hot water system at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center, new LED lighting at the Tsongas Center and Costello Athletic Center, and low-flow plumbing fixtures in residence halls.

As a result of these improvements, the university expects to save $1.2 million in annual energy savings. The upgrades will save 1.7 million gallons of water and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 9 million pounds each year. The AEP also eliminates $10 million in deferred maintenance across campus.

DCAMM Commissioner Carol Gladstone praised the university for its commitment to sustainability, adding that it has inspired her agency to raise the bar on sustainability, climate change and global warming in the projects it manages.

“Young people are going to have to deal with what we haven’t dealt with,” she said. “So thank you for inspiring and exhorting us to do this, because we have to.”

PITCHER PERFECT!

Senior Kaysee Talcik pitched the softball program’s first-ever perfect game in a 4-0 win at Stony Brook (N.Y.) on April 27. Talcik, a business administration major from Shelton, Conn., struck out five Seawolves in helping the River Hawks set a new Division I program record for single-season America East victories with 13. “I was very proud of Kaysee today,” said UML coach Danielle Henderson, whose team was vying for the top seed in the AE tournament. It was the second no-hitter of Talcik’s career.

MOW TOWN

Welcome to “Ewe” Mass Lowell.

For three days this summer, the half acre of wild grass and weeds along VFW Highway—behind the Costello Athletic Center and Pinanski parking lot on North Campus—was the biggest all-you-can-eat salad bar on campus. The customers? A herd of 120 sheep, courtesy of Goats-To-Go out of Georgetown, Mass.

While contractors previously hired by UML have had to contend with angry bees, poison ivy and gopher holes as they weed-whacked the slope in the summer heat, the sheep feasted round the clock (inside temporary fencing) to do the job in less time—and at half the cost.

The sheep, which were brought back the following week to “mow” along Pawtucket Street on South Campus, are just the latest innovative technique introduced by Grounds Operations Manager Erik Shaw to maintain the university’s 150 acres of land. From increasing the use of organic fertilizers and compost on lawns, to improving irrigation and purchasing the university’s first battery-electric lawn mower, his efforts have helped make UML one of the highest-rated campuses for sustainability in the country.
Everyone Has a Nurse in Their Lives

The Bring Diversity to Nursing Scholarship ensures that as our communities grow more diverse, our nursing workforce will keep pace.

By Beth Brogna

At age 7, when other kids were glued to the Disney Channel, Taylor Chau was obsessed with medical documentaries. “I loved watching surgeons,” she recalls. Yet when she decided to enroll at the Solomont School of Nursing, Chau’s decision had as much to do with language and culture as it did with science.

After her grandmother was severely injured in a fall, Chau realized the hospital staff was having trouble communicating with him because he spoke only Cantonese. “My mother and I had to interpret for him,” Chau says. “I chose nursing because I want to help bridge this kind of cultural divide.”

Diomeri Diaz ’21 was on her way to becoming a welder when a similar family experience steered her toward nursing. “I was in vocational school when my grandmother, who’s originally from the Dominican Republic, had a stroke,” she recalls. For three weeks, Diaz sat in the hospital, conversing with her and other family members in Spanish. “It really woke me up,” she says. “I saw how breaking the language barrier improves health care.”

Jacqueline Dowling, who directed UML’s baccalaureate nursing program for 10 years until her retirement in 2016, couldn’t agree more.

“Nurses who share cultural backgrounds with their patients are more likely to form better connections with them,” she says. “And better connections lead to better health outcomes.”

In 2008, concerned that the nursing workforce was not keeping pace with an increasingly diverse U.S. population, Dowling and other Solomont administrators launched the Bring Diversity to Nursing program. With $3 million in federal and state funding, they partnered with schools in Lowell and Lawrence to recruit more pre-nursing students from diverse backgrounds, and then provided them with the mentoring and financial support they needed to graduate.

By 2015, when the grant funding ended, 50 students from a variety of cultural backgrounds had graduated from UML, and they are now working in local hospitals and clinics.

Dowling considers those results “pretty phenomenal” — and not just for the students. When the program began, she recalls, “We knew we had to become more culturally competent. But we didn’t realize just how much we would learn from our students.” She recalls how she once spent an hour trying to teach one of her Cambodian American students how to make a hospital bed correctly. “I finally asked her how she made a bed at home, and she explained that they always used pins.” Dowling shakes her head. “How long did it take me to ask that question? That was my first lesson in dealing with cultural differences.

Another lesson learned: how reluctant students can be to ask for help, even in the face of major challenges. Take the student who was evicted from his apartment and slept in his car for two weeks but still kept up with all his studies. “Students here really want their education, and they work so hard to get it,” she says.

“Getting the scholarship really helped lift some of the stress of paying for college,” says Diaz, who has a part-time job at Market Basket and also works as a UMass Lowell resident assistant.

Says Chau, who plans to become an emergency room nurse: “Nurses can be very busy, and sometimes we focus only on the illness. But everyone has a life and a story. I want my patients to feel like someone took the time to listen to them, to make them feel less frightened and alone.”

The need for this kind of care is only accelerating. A recent study by the Boston Foundation found that between 1990 and 2017, every one of the 147 cities and towns in the region saw an increase in the percentage of people of color. More than 80 percent of that growth comes from new immigrants, who, researchers point out, have been central to the region’s strong economy. “At the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences, we provide students with the skills to be health advocates across the spectrum of care, including cultural competence,” says Dean Shortsle McKinney. “We want them to appreciate the importance of culture, and be able to help their clients navigate the health care world in a manner that resonates with their culture.”

Dowling is fond of saying that “everyone has a nurse in their lives” — a caregiver who made a big difference at a crucial moment. “If you fully appreciate what nurses do,” she says, “then you understand how important nursing education is. By investing in nursing students who reflect our nation’s demographics, we can help ensure a nursing workforce that better reflects the diversity, and the greatness, of our nation.”

To support the Bring Diversity to Nursing Scholarship, please visit www.alumni.uml.edu/BringDiversitytoNursing.
MENTAL HEALTH BY DESIGN

Karen Roehr, associate professor of art & design, gave graphic design students the assignment to create a poster on one of three subjects: opioid addiction, social media overuse or mental health. “I wanted to show students the power of a poster and the importance of dealing with contemporary social subject matter,” says Roehr, who also works as a graphic designer, illustrator and comic strip artist. “Designers can bring issues to public awareness, encourage a call to action and educate.”

The students’ work—shown throughout our “Why Are Today’s Students So Anxious?” feature story in this issue—presents a range of approaches to sensitive subject matter. German exchange student Elias Awad, whose poster is displayed here, says he wanted to communicate the ways in which social pressure impacts one’s mind. “I’m using a direct and simple way to bring more awareness and focus to this topic.” Check out the rest of the students’ work in the story, starting on Page 26.
Masters of Disaster

Last fall, Columbia Gas explosions rocked the Merrimack Valley. UML alumni led the recovery.

> by Geoffrey Douglas

As head of a quickly assembled team of close to 5,000 workers, Joe Albanese ’84 (above, right) was responsible for every aspect of the recovery, from restoring gas to the homes to feeding and sheltering the displaced.
Across three towns in the Merrimack Valley, fires were breaking out, homes were burning, explosions were rocking neighborhoods. Confusion, then panic, took hold among residents arriving home from rush hour commutes to find their streets blocked off by first responders. Davis was among the dozens of firefighters from as far away as Boston and Manchester, N.H., who worked nonstop until the next morning. “We were going house to house, checking on people,” he says.

They put out more than 60 fires in Andover, Lawrence and North Andover. The cause? A spontaneous buildup of pressure in the gas lines owned by Massachusetts-based Columbia Gas, causing boilers, and some entire houses, to explode. In all, one person was killed and another 20 were injured. More than 8,600 homes were evacuated. The fires were mostly out by nightfall, but the crisis was nowhere near over. Indeed, it was just getting started. Power was cut to all three communities. Hundreds of buildings were damaged. Thousands of customers were without natural gas for months. The gas lines had to be replaced and roads and streets repaired.

From the first emergency calls to the restoration of natural gas service, UMass Lowell alumni were involved in the recovery efforts from the Columbia Gas explosions. Engineers, executives, first responders and human service workers were among those who stepped in and stepped up, helping the communities to rebuild and recover.

In the aftermath of the explosions, Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency, neighboring towns loosed establishment, schools and senior centers were opened to take in evacuees.

On the UML campus, close to 100 affected students were offered help: housing in residence halls, food, clothing and school supplies, counseling services, even emergency funds for transportation. Several were moved into temporary housing.

Another three students, says Associate Dean of Student Affairs Anne Ciaraldi, “had been displaced altogether, first to hotels and then to trailers, before finally being able to move back home months later.”

Just weeks before the disaster, the university’s EMS team had formalized a partnership with the Dracut Fire Department to coordinate the response to incidents in the area. When the Dracut FD was deployed to Lawrence on the evening of the explosions, it was joined by five members of UMass Lowell’s EMS: students Isabelle Seal, David Fintelberg, Shilagh Fitzgerald and Brittany O’Neil and alumna Patricia Kelly ’18.

The students helped with medical inventory management and triage coordination at the command center, while Kelly served as logistics supervisor. But for all that was being done, as time went on, it became clear that a longer-range, top-down, centralized effort was needed.

North Andover firefighter Matt Davis ’00 was off-duty just after 4 p.m. last Sept. 13 when the app on his phone flashed its first message: “All members, please respond.”

And that’s not even mentioning the numbers that go with 5,000 workers repairing or replacing 48 miles of pipe. Still, his oversight duties were many. As leader of a quickly assembled team of close to 5,000 workers—plumbers, carpenters, laborers, pipelayers and electricians—he was responsible for every aspect of the project, from restoring gas to the homes (and keeping them heated in the meantime) to feeding and sheltering the displaced.

And it all needed to happen by an agreed-upon deadline of Dec. 16, less than three months after the work started. “We were racing against winter,” Albanese says. “There was an incredible sense of urgency. We had 50 percent more rain than usual for that time of year, and then a record-cold Thanksgiving weekend.”

The goal was to restore gas service and get people back in their homes before the real cold came. If all this had happened two months earlier, it would have been a whole different operation.”

Though numbers alone rarely tell the full story, in the case of Albanese’s three months on the job in the Merrimack Valley, they are instructive:

- 30,000 lives impacted
- 1,000 emergency generators
- 24,000 space heaters
- 15,000 hot plates delivered
- 1,000 temporary emergency shelter
- 980 emergency generators delivered
- 5,000 space heaters
- 150 temporary total rooms
- 500 RV trailers
- 2,200 families in emergency housing
- 980 emergency generators delivered
- 1,000 RV trailers
- 5,000 space heaters
- 15,000 hot plates delivered
- 1,000 temporary emergency shelter
- 980 emergency generators delivered
- 5,000 space heaters
- 150 temporary total rooms
- 500 RV trailers
- 2,200 families in emergency housing
- 980 emergency generators delivered

And that’s not even mentioning the numbers that go with 5,000 workers repairing or replacing 48 miles of pipe.
**FEATURE STORY**

**TIMELINE OF A TRAGEDY: EXPLOSIONS IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY**

**SEPT. 13, 2018**

**MASTERS OF DISASTER**

**UMASS LOWELL MAGAZINE**

**FALL 2019**

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**Green Street**

On top of all the logistics, there were the people to worry about. "Some of them were in homes that were burned or destroyed, or had neighbors who did. They're little kids—they want to know, 'is my home going to catch fire again? Am I going to die? Is this house really fixed?'

Whenever possible, de Lima would visit with these children in their homes, often with their parents present, and do what he could to allay their fears. But it was never easy, he says: "There's still a lot of fear out there. And a lot of really anxious children."

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**LAWRENCE AND NAVERSE NATIVE JOAN HATEM-ROY '82 WAS AT A DINNER IN NEWBURYPORT when she first saw the news on TV. "It was all just about the first responders," she remembers. "I wasn't sure what to make of it right away."

When Hatem-Roy, the CEO of Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, realized what was happening, she went into overdrive. "We coordinated with our state agencies, worked with the nonprofits, arranged beds in nursing homes, got people fed from Meals on Wheels, found drivers to go around checking homes—just about anything you could think of," she says.

The best part, she says, was how all the boundaries and work lanes seemed to melt away. "Everybody was stepping out of their little boxes," she says. "It was amazing to be part of it, actually. Without that sort of teamwork, I can only imagine how bad things could have been."

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**WECORDINED WITH OUR STATE AGENCIES, WORKED WITH THE NONPROFITS, ARRANGED BEDS IN NURSING HOMES, GOT PEOPLE FED FROM MEALS ON WHEELS, FOUND DRIVERS TO GO AROUND CHECKING HOMES—JUST ABOUT ANYTHING YOU COULD THINK OF," SHE SAYS.**

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**N DEC. 5, COLUMBIA GAS ANNOUNCED THAT GAS SERVICE WAS COMPLETELY RESTORED to 3,000 customers. Joe Albanese began the task of ramping down his team. Not long after, the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities announced that the final phase of the job—ensuring that roads are repaved, sidewalks repaired and graded, home furnaces replaced and heat and hot water restored—would be completed by Columbia Gas, at its expense, by no later than Oct. 31 of this year. There would be a new overseer now: Massachusetts company Nitsch Engineering, the largest woman-owned civil engineering firm in the state.**

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**"IT WAS AMAZING TO BE PART OF IT, ACTUALLY. WITHOUT THAT SORT OF TEAMWORK, I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW BAD THINGS COULD HAVE BEEN."

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**"WE COORDINATED WITH OUR STATE AGENCIES, WORKED WITH THE NONPROFITS, ARRANGED BEDS IN NURSING HOMES, GOT PEOPLE FED FROM MEALS ON WHEELS, FOUND DRIVERS TO GO AROUND CHECKING HOMES—JUST ABOUT ANYTHING YOU COULD THINK OF."

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**Joe Albanese**
WHY ARE TODAY’S STUDENTS SO ANXIOUS?

> BY ED BRENNEN
Mental health is one of the biggest silent killers of our generation, and we cannot tailor it specifically for students of his generation: Be mindful of your mental well-being the most of your college experience, because it will be over before you know it.

At Convocation last September at the Tsongas Center, Student Government Association President Andre DiFilippo presented the findings to Chancellor Jacquie Moloney and her executive cabinet in January 2018, and their response was immediate. “We have to change this. It will get done,” DiFilippo recalls them saying. “It was awesome to change this. It will get done,” DiFilippo recalls them saying. “It was awesome to see how many students were concerned about mental health issues, especially anxiety and depression. A common complaint was the wait time for a counseling appointment at the Wellness Center, which—like so many college clinics across the country—was facing an enrollment backlog as it tried to keep pace with surging demand.

UML IS HARDLY THE ONLY SCHOOL facing this challenge. Mental health issues have become an epidemic on college campuses across the country. According to a recent study by the American Psychiatric Association, the percentage of college students seeking mental health care has nearly doubled over the past four years, from 637 in 2014-15 to 824 last year. At UML, the number of students seeking counseling at the Wellness Center has jumped almost 30 percent over the past four years, from 637 in 2014-15 to 824 last year.

“Stress and anxiety themselves are healthy emotions that everybody experiences. We don’t expect people to have stress-free or anxiety-free lives,” Edelman-Blank says. “Healthy people get depressed and grumpy. They have anxiety and may occasionally have a panic attack. But when you’re stressed from four to seven at the Wellness Center, you’re in trouble.”

“Sometimes,” Edelman-Blank says, “they need it is that same-day appointment. Just talking to someone can help them feel better.”

The university has also partnered with the Jed Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps colleges and universities assess and enhance their existing efforts around student mental health by offering a clinical training program that provides the data to support what we know intuitively and anecdotally in our experiences.”

While depression used to be the leading reason why college students sought help from university counseling centers, it was surpassed by anxiety about five years ago, according to research by Penn State’s Center for Collegiate Mental Health. “Anxiety is basically worrying about something that could happen, and depression is about something that has happened,” says Edelman-Blank, who notes that there are three major types of anxiety: generalized anxiety disorder (worrying so much that it impairs your ability to function), social anxiety disorder (avoiding groups and constantly worrying about what other people think about you); and panic disorder (becoming so anxious that you have a major physical response). “It feels like a lion is coming toward you. It physically feels that scary,” Edelman-Blank says.

In a 2018 American College Health Association survey of 88,000 college students nationwide, two in five described being so depressed they “struggled to function,” while three in five felt “overwhelming anxiety” on the topic. A year earlier as chair of the student government’s academic affairs committee, he helped survey nearly 1,400 UML students on their college experience. DiFilippo analyzed the data to see how many students were concerned about mental health issues, especially anxiety and depression. A common complaint was the wait time for a counseling appointment at the Wellness Center, which—like so many college clinics across the country—was facing an enrollment backlog as it tried to keep pace with surging demand.

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“What is happening here? Why are today’s students so anxious? Are the pressures of college life—being away from home for the first time, academics, work, student loans, social life, relationships, career paths—that much different than they were, say, 30 years ago? And shouldn’t students expect some level of stress and anxiety in college, and we don’t expect it to go away,” says UML’s Director of Counseling Services Deborah Edelman-Blank, a licensed clinical psychologist with more than 15 years of experience on college campuses across the country.

To meet this growing need, the university boost the number of counseling clinicians at the Wellness Center, “It’s a big jump in terms of staffing and what we can offer,” Edelman-Blank says. “It’s not yet where I want us to be, but... it’s a step in the right direction.”

Those services include a new triage intake process to allow for same-day appointments. Now, students seeking help from Counseling Services for the first time can be seen right away for a half-hour screening. Depending on the severity of the concerns they present, students can either begin immediate treatment or be directed to individual or group therapy treatment.

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Through Counseling Services, Colangelo also connected with a social anxiety therapy group. “You walk around campus, and you feel like everyone around you is normal; that they don’t have issues,” she says. “It was really helpful to be in a room with people dealing with the same things.”

With that in mind, Counseling Services introduced several new group therapy options this spring, including a mindfulness and meditation group and a support group for international students. “It’s the added stressors of language and culture barriers in college.”

“Individual counseling is still our bread and butter, but our hope is to make group therapy a primary offering,” says Edelman-Blank, who points out that one counseling counselor seeing 10 students at a time helps maximize resources. “And group sessions help in the context of addressing students’ isolation and loneliness, that lack of connection.”

“But wait—are students today more connected than ever? Thanks to smartphones and social media, don’t they have hundreds of friends and followers with whom they can interact anytime, anywhere?”

“Students can’t learn from failures if every failure is treated like the end of the world.” —Psychotherapist T.J. Dinsmore ’04

“Helping Students in Distress.” Part of the Kennedy College of Sciences’ “Teaching and Learning Lunch Series,” the workshop was designed to help faculty members—whom are experts in fields like mechanical engineering, finance and art history, but have little exposure to social media—learn more about their students’ social behavior. Kate Leguee, the university’s associate director of student conduct and prevention of violence, shared tips on how to recognize student distress (ability to focus, lack of motivation, flat affect and how to talk with them if they are distressed or display support self-efficacy). Faculty members also learned more about STARS (Students at Risk), the university’s behavioral intervention program.

“Students can’t learn from failures if every failure is treated like the end of the world.” —Psychotherapist T.J. Dinsmore ’04

To that end, about 50 faculty members from across the university gathered on North Campus on a gray Friday afternoon last November for a two-hour workshop on “Helping Students in Distress.” Part of the Kennedy College of Sciences’ “Teaching and Learning Lunch Series,” the workshop was designed to help faculty members—whether experts in fields like mechanical engineering, finance and art history, but have little exposure to social media—learn more about their students’ social behavior.

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UMASS LOWELL MAGAZINE

FEATURE STORY

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

UMass Lowell takes a campus-wide approach to mental health awareness. Here are some of the programs and student groups that are here to help:

**STARs: The UMass Lowell Behavioral Intervention Team**
Facially, staff and students who work about a student's mental or physical well-being can submit an online referral to the university's behavioral intervention team, called Students at Risk (STARs). A collaborative team made up of representatives from the Dean of Student’s Office, Student Health Services, the Counseling Center, Disability Services, Campus Conduct, BEMI, and the UML Police Department meets weekly during the academic year to discuss the referrals. Typically, someone from Student Affairs then reaches out to the student to check in and offer help.

**Healthy H.A.W.K.S.**
Healthy H.A.W.K.S. (Health Advocate With Knowledge System) team made up of representatives from the Dean’s Office, Student Health Services, the Counseling Center, Disability Services, Campus Conduct, BEMI, and the UML Police Department meets weekly during the academic year to discuss the referrals. Typically, someone from Student Affairs then reaches out to the student to check in and offer help.

**Exercise is Medicine**
A collaboration between Campus Recreation, the Wellness Center, and the Exercise Physiology Lab, the program teaches students how exercise can improve their overall well-being by promoting them with 16 personal training sessions—provided by Counseling Services, are paired with Certified Student Trainers for personally tailored workouts at either the Campus Recreation Center or the Exercise Physiology Center.

**U Matter2**
U Matter2 is a campus initiative that works to empower the campus community to be proactive about suicide prevention, mental health and overall wellness. With the motto “One Conversation Can Save a Life,” the group is committed to the emotional well-being of the campus community. uml.edu/umatter

College athletes, who face the added pressures of competition and maintaining their academic eligibility, are not immune from the epidemic. In fact, the NCAA’s chief medical officer, Brian Hainline, has declared mental health to be the No. 1 issue in college athletics. In May, UMass Lowell hosted the America East Conference’s fourth annual Health and Safety Summit, which focused on mental health.

In the College of Education, meanwhile, future teachers and school administrators are learning how to work with students struggling with things like anxiety or trauma. While issues like these used to be addressed by specialists outside of the classroom, Assoc. Prof. Phitsamay Uy says many states, including Massachusetts, are implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) into their curriculum standards, which teaches students life skills such as managing emotions and working through conflicts.

“Having social workers and psychologists in schools is great, but that’s the reactive end,” says Uy, who notes that teaching candidates are being trained to take a more proactive approach, “checking in with students as part of their daily class routine.”

Uy, whose research focus is on teaching diverse populations, says some students are surprised to discover how much more there is to teaching than coming up with lesson plans. “Sometimes they think, ‘My job is to teach math or history. What do I need to know about social emotional learning?’” Uy says. “But if a child is coming to you traumatized or emotionally unstable for any reason, they’re not ready to learn.”

**Fortuitously, Experts Agree**

Anxiety and depression are both highly treatable. “They’re not things people have to plan to live with their whole lives,” Edelman-Blank says.

And the stigma around mental health issues, which DIFFA addressed head-on during his Convocation address, also seems to be waning. “There is less of a stigma,” Dinsmore says, “but there’s definitely still a ways to go until it is seen in a more normalized way, like a medical condition such as diabetes.”

While Colangelo initially worried what others on campus might think about her anxiety disorder, she came to realize that “everyone has their stuff” they’re dealing with. “I’m not ashamed of it at all,” she says. “Now it’s my thing, I deal with it.”

In fact, it even spurred her to pursue a $1,000 honors fellowship to help Assoc. Prof. Ashleigh Hillier research the experiences of college students with depression, anxiety and other emotional and intellectual disabilities. After collecting and analyzing data from almost 200 students for more than a year, Colangelo presented her findings this spring for her Honors thesis.

“We’re hoping to find out more about what predicts anxiety among our students, and figure out where the campus might be able to best provide supports,” says Hillier, whose early findings show that students who feel less connected to campus, such as transfer students, report feeling higher levels of anxiety.

Colangelo, who will begin pursuing her master’s degree in exercise physiology at UML in the fall, is thankful she chose a school that provided her with the resources and opportunity to not only overcome her obstacles, but to thrive. “As you grow up from freshman year to senior year, you realize everyone’s doing their own thing in college and has their own quirks,” she says. “Especially at a school like UMass Lowell, which is so big and so diverse, I feel it has such an accepting environment.”

**College athletes, who face the added pressures of competition and maintaining their academic eligibility, are not immune from the epidemic.**


uml.edu/125
At the end of last summer—after learning that the event would lead to many student scholarships—she decided it was “worth firing up the jet for.” Plus, Winfrey says, “it was a really good letter.”

She confirmed the date on Sept. 7, giving the university a little over two months to pull off what most organizations spend the better part of a year preparing for: Hosting perhaps the world’s most influential and well-known woman.

The campus has had practice hosting big-name visitors, to be sure: The two guests who preceded Winfrey in the Chancellor’s Speaker Series were bestselling author Stephen King and three-time Oscar-winning actress Meryl Streep.

But Winfrey is in a league of her own. King and Streep drove themselves to campus, for Pete’s sake—and not just because they happen to live close enough. Winfrey, on the other hand, can’t take a step without the world noticing. Her every moment is accounted for, her every move clocked.

It’s safe to say that pressure was felt at UML. But we River Hawks thrive under pressure.

Do not underestimate the power of a handwritten letter.

Of course, it helps if its author is the award-winning novelist Andre Dubus III. And, if you’re UMass Lowell, it helps if Andre Dubus III happens to teach in your English Department.

When Dubus wrote Oprah Winfrey a thank-you note after his novel “House of Sand and Fog” was featured on “Oprah’s Book Club” in 2000, she actually read it. More important to this story: She remembered it.

“(Of course) I wrote her a note,” Dubus says today. “She quite literally changed my life.” He is referring, in part, to the fact that his book’s inclusion in Winfrey’s club, and his subsequent appearance on her TV show, played an important role in the millions of copies “House” went on to sell. It was a No. 1 New York Times bestseller, shortlisted for the National Book Award and transformed into an Academy Award-nominated film.

Winfrey says she receives a surprisingly small number of letters from “Book Club” alumni, and so when Dubus reached out 15 years later to ask her for a favor, she recalled him fondly. Dubus spent three years going back and forth with her team, trying to persuade Winfrey to come to UMass Lowell as the featured guest in the university’s Chancellor’s Speaker Series.

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FALL 2019

37

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Oprah’s visit
by the numbers

Students who attended master class with Oprah
UML employees who worked on the event
Students in the initial group of Oprah Scholars
Sponsors for “A Conversation with Oprah Winfrey”
Attendees at the Tucker Sports Complex
Dollars raised for scholarships

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**PEARLS OF WISDOM**

“Oprah ends every magazine with ‘What is she doing?’”

“I wish my grandmother had lived to see you come her childhood in Mississippi. ‘There never was a nook or corner of a black child’s head for which there was no nook or corner of a white woman’s heart to help fill it,’ she says.

“Run your own race. Never worry about what other people do, because no one else is like you.”

**UMASS LOWELL MAGAZINE**

**NOV. 15 FINAL COUNTDOWN**

30:39 p.m.
Chancellor Moloney receives an email from alumnus Robert Blount ’77. “In her first year at UML, Blount’s husband, An Reitz Moore, was deployed to Iraq. ‘I had no idea how I was going to finish my last year, finish my honors thesis and take care of my 3 and 3-year-old daughters—in a city where we have no family,’ Blount writes. She did it, with support from UML— and Oprah’s Superfood Sundays.”

**3:50 p.m.**

**Oprah®-inspired magazine with What I know for sure.** In that spirit, that is what I know for sure. Getting a degree from UML was the best decision this military wife, mother of two and English literature nerd has ever made,” she writes. “What I know for sure is that by trusting the knowledge and advice and encouragement of UML, I was infused with energy that is constantly unfolding.”

She concludes with: “Thank you for tickets for Oprah: It’s a COMBAT NINJA.”

That, says Moloney, was a good letter.

**1:39 p.m.**

**3:00 p.m.**

“Oprah walks out on stage and students jump to their feet, clapping and cheering. She looks into the crowd and nods. Everyone is wearing the same blue T-shirt.”

“Oprah walks out on stage and students jump to their feet, clapping and cheering. She looks into the crowd and nods. Everyone is wearing the same blue T-shirt.”

“You get a shirt! You get a shirt! Everybody gets a shirt! in a nod to her famous giveaways on “The Oprah Winfrey Show.”

**10:30 a.m.**

The weather forecast for today continues to look dry. Alarms and WBZ Boston meteorologist Sarah Wroblewski ’05 report: “We’re looking at the first storm of the season for tomorrow— 2 to 4 inches of snow north and west of Boston. It could turn quite slippery, as we could see a period of freezing rain and some sleet mixed in.”

**3:45 p.m.**

Dubas—knowing that Team Oprah has warned that Winfrey “goes long” with her answers—shakes things up andforegrounds his own planned answers to allow more time for hers.

**4:22 p.m.**

As part of her response to education major Janicele Christopher, who asks what she’d like remembered about her, Winfrey mentions that the late Maya Angelou (“I’m not her favorite” to her straight-forward Winfrey told the school for girls that she “might be around.”

“I wish my grandmother had lived to see what your legacy will be, because your legacy is every life you touch.”

Winfrey says that when Dubas first asked her to come to UML, “I thought Why would I do that? It’s not like I’m going to be in Lowell.” She says she wanted to come because she wants his audience to think carefully about what you do. Winfrey notes that by the time she was 25, she was a news anchor in her 20s, but was “completely unprepared.”

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**4:41 p.m.**

“Run your own race. Never worry about what other people do, because no one else is like you.”

**5:00 p.m.**

As a loan from UML, escorts Winfrey to the front of the Tsongas Center so she can rest, but Winfrey says she wants to go straight to the reception.

Winfrey walks up to students and says, “Let’s meet a UML hockey jersey with her name on the back. ‘You see me in this on Instagram making my face’ she says.

**5:15 p.m.**

As Moloney and Winfrey walk through secured back halls of the Tsongas Center, Winfrey thanks her alma mater Moloney’s, waiting to no time on talk.1 . She tells a story about last summer, when I finished a third year being chancellor and was taking about how she would continue in the role. Winfrey says, “She reminded me to think deeply about what’s right for me and right for my community.”

“Never worry about what other people do, because no one else is like you.”

**5:20 p.m.**

About 200 sponsor reception guests queue up for the photo line. “I try hard to announce from the podium,” says Events Manager Kathleen Sullivan. “Never have a group lined up faster.”

**5:25 p.m.**

Winfrey enters the East Club Room and jumps right into the photo line, taking shots with guests inclusive Giovanni Domenico-Farrall and Mary Kate Fusel, shown above left.

**5:30 p.m.**

Winfrey says, “Nothing works without self-care and happiness.”

**5:35 p.m.**

Winfrey says that when Dubas first asked her to come to UML, “I thought Why would I do that? It’s not like I’m going to be in Lowell.” She says she wanted to come because she wants his audience to think carefully about what you do. Winfrey notes that by the time she was 25, she was a news anchor in her 20s, but was “completely unprepared.”

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**5:40 p.m.**

Winfrey mentions that the late Maya Angelou (“I’m not her favorite” to her straight-forward Winfrey told the school for girls that she “might be around.”

“I wish my grandmother had lived to see what your legacy will be, because your legacy is every life you touch.”

Winfrey says that when Dubas first asked her to come to UML, “I thought Why would I do that? It’s not like I’m going to be in Lowell.” She says she wanted to come because she wants his audience to think carefully about what you do. Winfrey notes that by the time she was 25, she was a news anchor in her 20s, but was “completely unprepared.”
5:30 p.m. 

Alumni arrive for a reception in the Taioli Club, decorated with handmade quotes like "Surround yourself only with people who are going to lift you higher." Some of Winfrey’s favorite foods are being served, including mini chicken pot pie, pea fritters, kale chips and carmel popcorn.

5:30 p.m.

Winfrey asks all reception staff if they’d like photos before she leaves.

Nov. 15

THE MAIN EVENT

5:00 p.m.

As a bomb-shifting dog does a final sweep of the building, the Media Relations team begins checking in members of print and broadcast media, including journalists from People magazine, The Boston Globe and Boston TV stations. The event would later garner more than 500 media hits.

5:30 p.m.

Doors open at the Tsongas Center. Despite the fact that it’s freezing and snow is starting to come down, the line outside already wraps around the building. All ticket holders are screened by metal detectors as they enter.

5:45 p.m.

The crowd—which has traveled from as far as Canada—comes through with the Oprah alphabet.

6:45 p.m.

Several people surge the stage to take photos on the set. "That was unexpected," Moloney says today, laughing.

6:50 p.m.

The stage is finally coming down, and the line outside is still long. Nearly 6,000 tickets were sold.

7:00 p.m.

After all interviews, Dubus—who cheekily describes her as "a voracious reader of some very fine books," Winfrey walks on stage and shouts, "Helloooo, Lowell!"

7:29 p.m.

Winfrey mentions that she drives a Volkswagen. "If you’re in a fancy car, people notice it, but if you’re driving a Volkswagen, nobody ever thinks you’re driving that." 

7:37 p.m.

Winfrey shares that she did not miss one show in 25 years of productions of "The Oprah Winfrey Show. Why? Because she wanted to be there for all the people who were showing up to see her." Tonight, she’s been up at 3 a.m., feeling sick, but I’d think about the women who got their nails done … or who bought their sparkly shoes,” in a nod to the chancellor’s silver heels. (“Those shoes were definitely out,” says Sherburne, "and somebody is screaming about your shoes," Moloney says today. “My night was, ‘Oh God, what am I going to talk about?’ What are we going to talk about? What are we going to talk about?"

7:40 p.m.

Winfrey tells a story about a time when Nelson Mandela invited her and another longtime partner, Stedman Graham, to stay at his house in South Africa. They were there for 10 days. "I was very nervous, and I’m not often intimidated. I kept going, ‘Oh my God, Stedman, what are we going to talk about? What are we going to talk about?’ She had given only three and a half minutes to deliver a 10- and half minute speech, and so the entire time she was feeling pressure to get her entire message.

7:52 p.m.

Winfrey explains that the idea for the school she built in South Africa was born during that trip, when she and Mandela were sharing sections of the Sunday newspaper and the front-page story was about the extreme poverty in that country. She asked if she thought it would ever change, and she told him, "Education is the only thing that will make a difference." And there was a casually mentioned detail that she had been thinking about opening a school. "By the next day, he had invited the Minister of Education over to the house," Winfrey says, "and I was just thinking about it … but you know Nelson Mandela’s house for 10 days, and you can’t give a candle.

7:56 p.m.

"I wasn’t trying to run for president—I was just trying to change the way they think, and education is one of the only things that does that," Winfrey says, and adds that one thing has made a greater impact in her life than her fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan. “She saw me. She got me.

8:23 p.m.

"I have this amazing life. It’s as good as you think it is—almost better. I’m not kidding. I’m not joking. "Winfrey concludes. "But it is so. It is so. Look at the grace that you have been given, and think about how to shift that paradigm to how you take what you’ve been given and use it to serve to the world. That’s what you’re going to do, Lowell." 

8:24 p.m.

Mehlenbacher, UMass Board of Trustees Chairman Rob Manning ‘84, ’11 and Chair of the Committee on Academic and Student Affairs Travis Fine, VP/FA would all walk on stage to present Oprah with an honorary degree. "An honorary degree is the highest honor you can bestow on an individual, and someone who calls Oprah Winfrey is only honorary. It is not earned. McManus says, "This is earned through a lifetime of making a difference in this world. And I can tell you, I can’t think of anyone this university has ever given an honorary degree to who is more worthy than Oprah."

8:37 p.m.

When Oprah asks him to stand in the audience on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” in 2001, Nelson Mandela reminds her that she had to go to school at 3 a.m. in order to pass her exams. "Yes, I would like to match the $1.5 million—so I am very grateful." Winfrey says. "I said, ‘I was just thinking that … I wish I could pull it off.’"

8:40 p.m.

Moloney says today. "My night was, ‘I’m speechless,’ says a shocked Moloney, "I really believe she left Lowell a better place," Moloney says. "But it isn’t just the money, it’s the impact. And I’m sure it’s the people. What you’re going to do, Lowell!"

8:56 p.m.

"It is my honor to meet each of you,” Winfrey says, addressing the six students. "I read each of your letters. I was so moved by each of your stories that coming here and sharing this beautiful evening with you all, I decided to do even more. I would like to match the $1.5 million—so that students like you can continue in the path of the greatest, purest, truest expression of themselves."

The arena erupts in a cheer.

8:31 p.m.

#4

"We are all working toward the highest, truest and most pure expression of ourselves as human beings."

THE AFTERMATH

As Winfrey emerges from a black car at the Tsongas Center, it is snowing heavily. Her jet has been grounded because of the weather, so her team has booked rooms nearby. At her arrival of black Escalades passes through the rotary in front of the Tsongas Center—an route to Cobblestones restaurant, where she will order tortilla soup and the blackened shrimp appetizer, and happily pose for selfies with staff and customers——Winfrey gets out and waves joyfully to the thousands of fans fighting against the wind and snow to get to their cars. "I really believe she left Lowell a better place," Moloney says. "I’ll be sure to mention that in our thank-you letter.

#4

"Oprah was here"
Inspire, Invent, Give Back:
A Career of Breakthrough Moments

> BY GEOFFREY DOUGLAS

By the time he visited the university three years ago as a guest judge of the DifferenceMaker contest, Brian Rist '77 had already given generously to UMass Lowell. An initial $25,000 endowment five years before had grown by then to more than $100,000. But Rist says he was affected by something more on that visit: “These groups of students so incredibly passionate about trying to solve real-world problems: poverty, hunger, polluted drinking water—well, that was just really inspiring to me.”

When Rist committed last fall to a gift of $6 million—the largest single donation in the school’s history, taking it past its initial $125 million fundraising goal—he made clear that he intends a sizable single donation in the school’s history, taking it past its initial $125 million fundraising goal—he made clear that he intends a sizable single donation in the school’s history, taking it past its initial $125 million fundraising goal. “Brian’s generosity will have a tremendous impact on our share to go toward the DifferenceMaker program. This is the power of ‘Our Place’—this determination to help new generations to graduate from college. I’m learning so much, you wouldn’t believe—and probably as much from the other students as from the course itself. They’re from all over the world, many from China,” he says.

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THE ROOM BUZZED
On the heels of both men was a smiling Ed Gallagher ’84, recently retired senior vice president and general manager of sales for Comcast Corp.’s Northeast Division. Comcast sponsored the evening, and Gallagher is friends with Insana and Kamen, the latter of whom announced he was “here to recruit” UML students for his company.

Having both experts made for a memorable night, but it was also emblematic of the connection between the university and Comcast. None of it would have happened without Gallagher’s connections, nor Comcast’s support.

The students loved it.
“Choosing that night I was flooded with thank-yous from students,” says Holly Butler ’11, ’13, the university’s entrepreneurial initiatives project director, who oversees DifferenceMaker. “There aren’t many times the likes of Ron Insana and Dean Kamen are in the same room, and Ed and Comcast made that possible for our students.”

GOLD-STAR SPONSOR
Comcast is a Fortune 50 company, the largest broadband provider in the country. It is also the provider on campus offering more than 100 live channels through Comcast Xfinity as well as other TV services and on-demand and DVR capability. The service is included in students’ room and board fees.

“At Comcast, we consider the university a partner, not a customer,” says Gallagher, who retired in March. A month after Insana spoke, Comcast was among the sponsors of Oprah Winfrey’s appearance at the UMass Lowell Chancellor’s Speaker Series, a windfall fundraiser for student scholarships.

“We are absolutely happy with our partnership with Spectra,” says UML’s Director of Athletics Peter Casey, who just finalized another long-term deal with the management company. “Partnering with them definitely gives us some advantages, especially in terms of booking events. They use their relationships and leverage. This is what they do, after all.” Comcast also works to help the greater Lowell community, with an annual Comcast Cares day of community service.

A SHARED WORK ETHIC
Dozens of UMass Lowell graduates work in Comcast’s Greater Boston regional office, according to the company, from entry-level positions to management.

Gallagher, a business management graduate who minored in computer science and math, is emblematic of one consistent trait over time for UML grads, and one Kamen emphasized that he sees in UML students: they’re hard-working.

“Giving back is always important, but giving back to the community at UMass Lowell is especially important to me,” says Gallagher. “I’m so appreciative for what UMass Lowell did in helping me launch a career. … Being involved as an alum has made me realize how blessed I was to be there.”
Whether you hail from UMass Lowell, ULowell, Lowell Tech or Lowell State, you’re invited to join us on UML Connect—a new online career and mentoring platform for UML alumni, students, faculty and staff.

Become a mentor, be mentored, have career conversations and share job opportunities and professional interests.

Signup now to be a part of it: umlconnect.org

The Benefits of Planned Gifts

Remembering UMass Lowell in your will or trust is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give to future generations of students. Planned gifts can also provide you with significant benefits as part of an overall financial plan. They can help you maintain control of your assets during your lifetime, take advantage of tax benefits, leave a legacy at UMass Lowell and possibly provide you with income during your lifetime.

For more information about making a planned gift and become part of our Legacy Society, contact the Office of Gift Planning at 978-934-4810 or ogp@uml.edu.

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Become a mentor, be mentored, have career conversations and share job opportunities and professional interests.

Signup now to be a part of it: umlconnect.org

RIVER HAWKS
HELPING
RIVER HAWKS

Folks notice Markus Sebastiano ’03. His art is big, modern and bold, a bridge between past and present. His studio is in a 3,000-square-foot space in a Lawrence mill. You notice his layered mix of media ingredients—everything from newspapers to acrylics, stain, metal, spray paint, wood and water. He does some of the work in his father’s sheet metal and fabrication shop in Methuen.

He got his start at UML, graduating with an art degree in 2003. He was known then as Mark Comeau. Friends had always called him Markus and his grandfather’s birth name was Sebastiano, so in branding himself professionally, he bridged past and present.

In art class, he was instantly smitten with Photoshop.

“The art program was smaller when I was there,” he says. “It was easy in a way, because it was what I was really passionate about. I loved what I was doing. I learned to do Photoshop in my first design class and fell in love with the digital side of things. It’s a huge part of my work now. It’s a huge part of the production. It’s a working world I know all about.”

Markus recently took off around 20°C after he filmed an interior design show for Bravo, to air in the near future.

Folks are noticing all over the place now.—DP

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He also treasured classes with photography professor Arno Minkkinen, “a huge influence—a professor who was a working artist known all over the world.”

Sebastiano’s own career took off around 2014, after he’d worked in branding, graphic design and apparel.

He now sells his art to corporate and private clients, and is commissioned by buzz-worthy restaurants and hotels to make art to fit each space.

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MORE THAN 70 YEARS after textile chemistry grad student Y.L. Yang '48 paused for a photo in front of Southwick Hall, his daughter stood in the very spot. Marjorie Yang, chair of the $1 billion Hong Kong-based textile company Esquel Group, visited campus recently and talked to students about sustainability and social responsibility. “He didn’t go to MIT,” she said. “He chose to come here because this was the happening place. And I think, today, maybe we are going back to that.”

‘64 Francis Welch

‘69 Pat Terrana
Published two books this year. “The Alice Who Wrote Letters” is a crime novel that begins in Lowell and has scenes in a fictional town outside Boston, while “Bump Diamentl Washington” is a satirical account of Trump’s presidency. [1]

‘74 Christine (Hanka) Erens
Retired and moved to Southwest Florida. She reports, “I’ve traveled extensively by sailboat and motor yacht along the East Coast, Bahamas and Florida coast. Many trips and tours of Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, Spain, Germany, Belgium, France, USA, Canada, Caribbean, Mediterranean, and, soon, the Amazon River!”

‘74 Michael Miyamoto
Is a principal endowed chair to teach accounting.

‘75 Leslie Lambert
Has been named IPC Raymond E. Prihar Hall of Fame Award in recognition of his contributions to IPC and the electronics industry. An active IPC volunteer and leader for IPC and the electronics manufacturing industry for more than 30 years, Lambert is the vice president and technical director at EPI Technologies.

‘75 Walter van Schalkwijk
Is a principal battery scientist at Microsoft. He also teaches as an adjunct professor of chemical engineering at the University of Washington.

‘76 Norman E. Decker
Was named CEO of the Hyde Collection Art Museum, a historic museum complex with a distinguished collection of art in Glens Falls, N.Y.

‘77 Michael Lane
Recently retired from administration at the University of Louisiana Monroe and accepted an endowed chair to teach accounting.

‘78 Anne Tisdale
Is a retired af to career as a Women’s health nurse practitioner. Anne’s hobbies include painting (two of which she’s sold), photography, singing, cycling and ballroom dancing.

‘79 David Martino
Director of the Boston Univer- sity Wind Ensemble, announced the release of “Separating Spaces: Music by Boston University Composers,” an album featuring the ensemble conducted by Martino. This is the ensemble’s third full-length album.

‘79 Rene LeClaire
Is a vocalist featured in the Los Alamos Big Band, a 16 instrument wing band. LeClaire has been singing since he was a child and a cantor at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. He has been featured in the Los Alamos Daily Post in New Mexico for his outstanding voice and participation in his greater community.

‘79 Michael Miyamoto
Has been appointed director of the Department of Environmental Management in Maui, Hawaii.

‘80 Jason Ewing
Has been appointed to the newly formed advisory board at Plymouth Rock Technologies. Following his retirement from his position as vice president of operations at Raytheon’s Integrated Defense business in 2018, Ewold will be bringing his expertise to the table as Plymouth Rock Technologies Inc. seeks to create and improve several threat detection and defense technologies.

‘81 Kevin St. Cyr
Has been hired as senior vice president at Murphy McCormack Capital Advisors.

‘81 Three-time Tony Award-winning producer and founder of Broadway HD Bonnie Comley (below, right) received a Women of Achievement Award at the WP Theater’s 40th Anniversary Salon Gala. Her award was presented by Charlotte St. Martin, president of The Broadway League. WP Theater is the nation’s oldest and largest theater company dedicated to developing, producing and promoting the work of women in theater at every stage in their careers.

‘82 Kristin Kilian
Is retiring after over 35 years leading Parker Middle School’s and Reading Memorial School’s choral programs. She accepted the position at Parker Middle in Reading, Mass., just one year after her graduation from UMass Lowell and has been inspiring students with music since that day.

Class Notes

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Class Notes
I would love to confuse Lorna Boucher '86 for a UML faculty member. She may work in New York City as chief marketing officer at Instinet, a global financial securities company, but the Lowell native is a familiar presence on campus.

"I love coming back. Everyone here is so fun to work with and so energized," Boucher said during a recent visit, when she shared her insights on leveraging your personal brand with more than 90 students and community members at the UMass Lowell Innovation Hub.

One of the students in attendance was senior Abigail Tavenere '19, a recipient of the Lorna Boucher '86 Endowed Scholarship, which benefits women majoring in business administration at the Manning School.

Tavenere, a first-generation college student from a low-income family, had never met Boucher before. She seized the opportunity to thank her in person while also picking up some advice on building a career in marketing and management.

"I love her personality, and I love feeding off the energy," Tavenere says. "I thought she was fantastic." Boucher, who earned her degree in marketing and international management, gives both her time and her treasure to the university. She's been involved with UMass Lowell's Class of 1989 for the past 30 years, and she now chairs the Class of '86.

"It's been a shorter than some,
the race is
around the world
athletes from
northeast Spain,
traveled to an
May, Tom
and in the meantime, a marriage and
operator. Later, he worked at various jobs while
the competition, though.
freedom in retirement, and his answer comes
with the company 25 years, and in the industry for
for the new Salem Harbor Energy Center. By the
time he retires later this year, he will have worked
with the company 25 years, and in the industry for
close to 40.
Ask him how he plans to spend his newfound
freedom in retirement, and his answer comes
quickly. "Travel, train and run." Not all of it is about
the competition, though. "Racing brings me
in touch with a whole community of people," he says. "We train
together, run together, compete in some of the
same events. That's a big part of it for me."

There wasn't always time, Baille earned his un
undergrad degree at UMass Amherst while he served
in the Army National Guard as a heavy equipment
operator. Later, he worked at various jobs while
pursuing a master's degree in civil engineering at
UML, and finally came the early years at
and—in the meantime, a marriage and
four kids. By his 40th birthday, racing was little
more than a high school memory.

"But then, with the kids getting older and things settling down a little at work, I started to think about it," Baille says. "I think that first races was the 2001 Mill City Triathlon in Lowell.
Since then, he has completed dozens of triathlons, road races, biking events and swim-race events. "But of all the outings I answer there, he says, the official Olympic triathlon—a
is the race of
five-mile run—and a little farther
n
According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, people living in areas that have experienced persistent violence. "There is no better person
Leader of the BPD's new Bureau of Community Engagement, Baston says her
superintendent. She was promoted to the position after 22 years on the force.
GEOFFREY DOUGLAS
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Malcolm "Mac" Charles's astounding skill in assembling his team's vehicle earned him the respect of his superiors and the trust of his team. He was known for his no-nonsense approach and his ability to make tough decisions quickly. Despite the challenges he faced, he always led his team with a steady hand, ensuring their safety and success. His dedication to the mission never wavered, and his leadership was highly regarded by all who knew him.

Read More
The Right Move

When Tim DiFrancesco served as the head strength and conditioning coach for the Los Angeles Lakers, he worked with the likes of superstars Kobe Bryant and Steve Nash. “Preparing and treating high-level athletes for six years was a rich and incredible experience,” says DiFrancesco, who earned a doctorate of physical therapy in 2006.

But he knew in his heart that he wanted to have an impact on more people’s lives during his career. “I realized that I wanted to use my skills, passion and experience to help more people than a 15-person roster get healthy,” he says.

So he left the Lakers to dedicate his career to his business, TD Athletics Edge, a fitness training facility located in Salem, Mass. DiFrancesco and his staff of coaches and nutritionists help many clients, from pro athletes to the average person looking to get in better shape, achieve their maximum performance through training, recovery and nutrition.

TD Athletics Edge recently became a partner with UML’s Exercise Science program, providing students with hands-on learning opportunities working with clients. They probably wish they could work with some of the more well-known athletes. While DiFrancesco left Los Angeles, some of Hollywood’s biggest stars still seek him out for help. Actress and comedian Amy Schumer credits him with helping her to recover from back and hip injuries.

“I want to thank [former Tim DiFrancesco client] Brianne DiFrancesco for this article. She is the key to my recovery beyond what I thought possible,” she wrote on Instagram last fall.

Continued...
An Evangelist for Civics Education

S
ocial studies and English teacher Michael Neagle ‘10 helps eighth-graders tackle real problems in their communities, like teen vaping and distracted driving. State lawmakers call him to discuss legislation.

City councilors take his meetings.

It’s all part of Neagle’s civics curriculum at the Pyne Arts Magnet School in Lowell, where he teaches students about the three branches of govern-

ment through hands-on programs. They learn about the legislative process through Generation Citizen, moving step-by-step to identify a problem, figure out a solution and advocate for it. They learn about the courts through Discovering Justice, a mock trial program that culminates in them arguing a Bill of Rights case at the federal courthouse in Boston. They study the presidency and the Cold War in model presidential elections at school. They take part in community service projects in an after-school club.

Neagle’s students graduate with the tools to exercise active citizenship.

“Rather than learning about other people doing civics, they do it,” Neagle says. “We’ve had state legislators call here during class to talk to students about a bill on teen vaping.”

Last summer, Massachusetts updated its social studies standards to make the eighth-grade curriculum all about civics education—exactly what Neagle is already doing. He was recently selected to serve on the state’s Civics Assessment Development Committee and is already helping to implement the new standards in Lowell.

His pioneering work led to the 2017 Teacher Change Maker Award from Generation Citizen and the 2018 Don Salviucci Award from the Massachusetts Council for Social Studies. His students have won awards, too, including the Gener-

ation Citizen award for best civic action—outreach to legislators on funding for suicide awareness and prevention programs in schools—and best project in the state for their efforts to fund teen vaping preven-

tion through an update to the state’s tobacco tax bill. Another teen vaping bill they sought, restricting the sale of flavored nicotine pods, has been introduced in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Yet Neagle calls himself “the least likely teacher you’re ever going to find.” Teaching wasn’t even on his radar in college, he says.

At Malden High School, he pursued the trade track, with plans to become an electrician. His mom, who’d worked her way through Bunker Hill Community College, urged Neagle to go to college first and study business. So he entered UMass Lowell at age 17—but “I just wasn’t ready.” He joined the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve, heading for training camp at Parris Island after freshman year.

Thanks to the G.I. Bill, Neagle returned to college at Westfield State University, where he studied communications and became the first in his family to graduate with a bachelor’s degree. The Marines also inspired his love of history, travel and culture, thanks to annual training trips with his cold-war infantry unit to Estonia and Norway.

After graduation, he went to work for an educational travel company in Boston, where he arranged and led trips to Europe, Tunisia, Turkey, Australia and Panama for high school students. He kept studying, too, taking night classes in history at UMass Lowell and UMass Boston. Then he decided to earn a master of education in curriculum and instruction—and teach.

“Through the Marine Corps, I found out I was interested in history and travel, and through educational travel, I discovered that I love working with kids,” he says. “Being around young people is inspiring—I wanted to work with them full time.”

A meeting with Prof. Patricia Fontaine ‘96 was key to his decision to come to UMass Lowell. “She was fantastic, and very supportive,” he says.

In the decade since, Fontaine has continued to mentor him, and they’ve worked together on several projects. Neagle hosts a service-learning program for several of her College of Education students each semester, who visit his eighth-

grade classes to lead lessons in civics.

Fontaine recommended Neagle for the committee that advised the College of Education during its recent state recertification. She also invited him to the professional development workshop where he learned about Generation Citizen—and then got him a small grant to fund his pilot project, bringing it to his middle school students. Neagle’s love of education doesn’t stop when he goes home at night. Since earning his M.Ed., he’s completed a graduate certificate in history and educational leadership at Fitchburg State University and started another in Holocaust and genocide studies at Salem State University. “I’m a Waking learner,” he says. UML
FORMER RIVER HAWKS DEGROOT, KNEELAND
Teammates Once Again

On a pleasant January morning at the Miami Martins' spring training campus in Jupiter, Fla., Manager of Player Development and Scouting Geoff DeGroot ’15 is helping Cam Kneeland ’12, the organization’s new position player rehab coach, get acquainted with the facility and some of the people with whom he’ll be working.

Seven years earlier, as teammates on the UML baseball team, the roles were reversed. Back then, it was Kneeland, a senior third baseman, who took the freshman shortstop DeGroot under his River Hawks wing.

“Cam was one of the guys I gravitated to,” Kneeland recalls of his former weightlifting partner. “We had a good connection.”

“Cam was probably the best player on the team that year, and he was a good role model for me to have because he was about the business the right way,” DeGroot says. “I was very lucky to have him help me along, especially as a freshman being away from home for the first time.”

When they were playing side by side on the LaLacheur Park infield in 2012, could they have ever imagined that day one day be working for the same major league ballclub?

“If you’d told me that Cam Kneeland was going to be working for a professional baseball organization, that wouldn’t surprise me at all,” DeGroot says. “But us working together, that would have been hard to believe. Baseball is a small world, though. It’s crazy how things work out.

Kneeland, a native of Rowley, Mass., was a three-time First Team All-Northeast-10 player for the River Hawks, hitting .325 with 44 doubles and three-time First Team All-Northeast-10 player for the team that year, and he was a good role model for me to have because he went about his business the right way,” DeGroot says. “I was very lucky to have him help me along, especially as a freshman being away from home for the first time.”

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Kneeland, a native of Rowley, Mass., was a three-time First Team All-Northeast-10 player for the River Hawks, hitting .325 with 44 doubles and 114 RBIs for his career.

“Cam is arguably one of the top five players to ever don a River Hawks uniform,” Coach Ken Harring says of the 2012 Lzeichner Championship Award winner, given to the top male and female athletes of the year. “He always worked hard and set a tremendous example on how to handle success and failure.”

After earning a bachelor of liberal arts degree, Kneeland played five seasons of independent and minor league baseball. In 2017, while in the Baltimore Orioles organization, he was offered a coaching job with the Single-A Frederick Keys.

“It was really hard when I first started coaching; I’d always miss playing. But I think coaching is a lot,” Kneeland says.

Last September, Kneeland caught up with Harring at the River Hawks’ annual Boudin–Stone Golf Tournament in Dixie. “I called to get Geoff today,” Harring asked. The last Kneeland and DeGroot had heard, DeGroot was working in player development with the New York Yankees.

Harrin told him that DeGroot was now with the Marlins, and that perhaps Kneeland should give his old teammate a call.

Before Kneeland knew it, the Marlins were flying him down to Florida for an interview. At UML, DeGroot had converted to pitcher his senior season, when he received the 2015 David J. Boudin Award, presented to the top male and female student-athletes of the year.

The 6-foot, 185-pound right-hander signed a minor league deal with the Yankees that summer, and in 2017, while in the Double-A Trenton Thunder.

“I’ve learned a lot by seeing how things work in a different organization,” says DeGroot, who works with the professional, amateur and international scouting departments in addition to helping manage the minor league system. “My responsibility is a lot broader than it was with the Yankees, which makes every day different.”

“Once I started playing professional baseball and saw what kind of talent there is, I quickly realized that I could have more of an impact on an organization in the front office, knowing my own personal skill set,” says DeGroot, who earned a degree in business administration (with a concentration in marketing) from the Manning School of Business.

The Yankees saw DeGroot’s front office potential, too, and offered him a job in player development in 2016. “I spent all that time and effort getting a business degree—what was something that was always important to me,” says DeGroot, who went to work for Gary Denbo, the organization’s vice president of player development. “I’m fortunate that I can combine my love and passion for baseball with my business degree and put it to use.

When Kneeland legend Derrek Jator became CEO of the Marlins in 2017, he hired Danbo to run player development and scouting. A few months later, Denbo recruited DeGroot to join the staff in Miami.

“I’m fortunate that I can combine my love and passion for baseball with my business degree and put it to use.” DeGroot says. "And that’s exactly what Cam will do. I have zero doubt about that."
Jonathan Makrez has been appointed interim dean/director of YOU Boston, an organization that empowers young people from low-income or at-risk backgrounds to succeed in the workforce, in the community and in their lives. For the past six years, he has served in almost every position in the organization as he moved from direct staff to service management and organization planning. Most recently, he served as the assistant deputy director of career development.

Brian Amada published his debut novel, “Gin Tom,” a young adult novel, the first of what he hopes will be a four-part series about a young man navigating the complications of life. A middle school teacher, Amada finds his audience with his life in Westport, Mass., with his wife and 2-year-old son.

Akhilsh Kumar ‘12, ‘13 received a national award from the Chen Zucchini Innovation Grant to join the team of the Marine Biological Laboratory as a key collaborator in the RNA Imaging Initiative, an interdisciplinary center dedicated to research, discovery and training in biological imaging and analysis.

Emest Neuchan graduated from Northeastern University’s Law School in 2015, and was the commencement speaker for his class. He is currently working on completing his doctor of law and policy degree from Northeastern. He is a founding member of the Africa America Alliance, whose signature project has been to take a monument for Nelson Mandela.

Brian Gaudreau, a project manager and associate at Herchoc Assoc, is now a licensed professional engineer in Massachusetts, having passed the professional engineering exam following more than 10 years of experience in both public and private construction.

Ryan Fournier ’12, ’15 began working with HealthcardSource soon after his graduation from UMass Lowell and now works as their lead software engineer.

“A winner is a dreamer who never gives up.” —Jackie Meldal

Amy Richard’s has been promoted to manager in the Holyoke office of Whitehouse, providing accounting, tax and advisory services.

Juan Carlos Rivera was named professional of the year by the Professional Association of the Boys & Girls Club of America. Rivera has been a youth worker for 25 years and received the professional of the year honor for the Northeast region earlier this year.

Brendan MacEchron became a police officer in Reading, Mass. He previously worked as an officer in the Billerica Police Department.

Michael Green was promoted to chief information officer at Young Living Essential Oils. In his new role, Green will focus on growing scalable information technology systems to handle the company’s increasing volume of product sales.

Renu Agarwajn, Jr. ’15, ’17, has been appointed as a Burlington, Mass., police officer. A Burlington High School alumnus and longtime resident, he has returned to his hometown to serve on the force in Burlington.

Aaron Manzi is a co-founder of Privo Technologies. Privo is developing a revolutionary treatment for oral cancer, and just hit a huge milestone by opening its first clinic trial with its first patients. In target early-stage oral cancer, IOM prada.

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Maggie Gallagher ‘18 was interning and studying for a seminar in Washington, D.C., when she first heard of Lori Trahan, who was running for Congress in Massachusetts’ 3rd District. So when Gallagher, a political science major, returned to Lowell in fall 2017, she went to hear Trahan speak at the iconic Owl Diner. Everything Trahan talked about — reducing student debt, supporting public education, raising the minimum wage and improving health care — resonated with Gallagher, the daughter of a hard-working single mom. Although Gallagher was working her way through UMass Lowell with multiple jobs, she signed up as an unpaid campaign intern on the spot. “I felt she was very genuine,” Gallagher says. “I said, ‘I want to help you!’” Gallagher, a Student Government Association senator at the time, was joined on the campaign by two UML friends: then-SGA President Lisa Degou and Alexandra Karabatsos ‘18, a former vice president. The three moved into off-campus housing together, working for Trahan every spare minute while fulfilling classwork and homework. They brought home campaign projects to finish and brainstormed strategy until the wee hours. Sarah Karabatsos ‘17 often joined them.

“We’d be graphic designers for campaign materials in the morning, and in the afternoon, we’d be sanding out makers, dropping signs or figuring out a visibility strategy,” Gallagher says. “It was the ultimate chaos game. How do we get our message out to the most people?”

Their dedication paid off. They were part of the team that helped Trahan eke out a 145-vote victory in the 10-way Democratic primary last September and is convincing win against Republican Rick Green in November. Now all of them work for her full time.

In Washington, D.C., Degou is her scheduler, and Karabatsos is her legislative correspondent. In Trahan’s district office in Lowell, Gallagher is the staff assistant, and Karabatsos is liaison to the western part of the district, helping with constituent service, outreach and economic development.

Three more alumni anchor the district office: District Director Emily Byrne ’02, ’04, Constituent Services Director Sara Khun-Leng ’99 and Valentine Stambul ’14. Gallagher is currently the state’s chief of staff, helping to get Byrne and Khun-Leng right out of college. Trahan mentored the younger women, and they stayed close even as Trahan moved to the private sector and Byrne and Khun-Leng joined the community relations and family services team at the Lowell Police Department.

Byrne spoke with the younger intern when she went to Congress to serve as UMass Lowell’s chancellor. Byrne is the chair of the UMass system board, GIS, while U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, Meehan’s successor, announced in the summer of 2017 that she would not seek another term, Byrne got the itch for politics again. A month later, Trahan jumped into the race. Byrne helped out in her spare time, and after Trahan won, Byrne agreed to manage her district office — with Byrne’s blessing.

“The campaign got the fire burning in me again. It’s also an interesting time to come back into politics and to be part of a team with a woman leader,” Byrne says. “I feel like I can have an impact, especially at this uncertain time for our country.”

Nicholas Guioty released his second album, “Immensities II,” which falls under the genre of “classical crossover with layered compositions of different instruments.” He is completing a master’s degree in music at Boston University.

Sally Pham and Sam Hilliard opened the Vinaan Café in downtown Lowell. Since she was a student at UMass Lowell, Pham has been on a mission to bring a Vietnamese-inspired coffee and bubble tea shop to Lowell. The café opened last summer and is located near City Hall. [10]

Dan Rafter has become a member of the Plastics Pioneers Association. Rafter is vice-president of sales and marketing at Deltech Polymers and has been in the plastics industry for more than 42 years.

Nancy Curren ’12, ’16 is a nurse practitioner at Olive Street Clinics in Tewksbury, Mass. She writes, “Very proud of my daughter, Caroline Hill, a student in the UMass Lowell Honors College, Class of 2022.”

Kelsey Harper accepted a new job at the University of New Hampshire, Durham. For three years, she has been an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology and the NHSPRO Foundation.

Victoria Launoire and Nicholas Glassford ’14 got engaged in front of Lowell’s Children’s Village in the Mill, in Lowell. “I had my daughter, Caroline Hill, a student in the UMass Lowell Honors College, Class of 2022.”

Casey O’Neill has joined the certified public accounting firm LeVine, McDonnell & Roberts in Pennsylvania.

Nicole Gagnon is a behavioral therapist for Beacon ABA Services. She is currently enrolled in the behavior analysis graduate program at Cambridge College.

Dara Sayegh recently opened The 978 Café in Dracut, Mass., fulfilling his high school dream. Sayegh has opened more coffeehouses throughout the state. [11]

Ashley Porter is an acquisitions assistant at Tantor Media.

Mary Foley is executive in UMass Lowell’s Fall Track Program to earn an M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction. She continues to work at UML as a Writing Center tutor, aiding students from all majors and backgrounds.

Karyn Halliet passed the NCLD-RN exam and recently enrolled in the Massachusetts Army National Guard.

Ryan Jewel graduated from the police academy and has been hired as a police officer in Framingham, Mass.

Trî Mai ’15, ’18 is working as a data scientist at MFS Investment Management.

Alexandro Mora is a senior scientist heading up cell development at Jouine Therapeutics.

Nidhi Belur is working at Intel Corp., as a network software development engineer.

Daniel Krkonick and James Tochej, a current UMass Lowell student, have teamed up to launch a new digital media network to cover obstacle course racing on a global scale. Their company, OCRR Network (Obstacle Course Racing Media), captures the craze of obstacle course racing by companies like Spartan Race, Tough Mudder and Warrior Dash. They are now launching content on popular applications like Amazon Prime, Hulu, Netflix, Syfy TV, Diah and Roku. [12]

> By Katherine Webster

CONGRESSWOMAN FILLS KEY ROLES WITH UML ALUMNI

By Catherine Webster

The Trahan Seven

Congresswoman fills key roles with UML alumni

by Catherine Webster
Alumni Events

1. From left: Brian Phillips '75, Dennis Hollis '75, Barry Chomiak '79 and Michael Rappold '74 enjoy some program fun at a Red Sox vs. Phillies game in Philadelphia.

2. Barry Gorr '10, Liz Daggie, Craig Daggie '09, Lynn McCarthy '13 and Gregg McAuliffe '13 gather in Denver to meet fellow alumni in the area and enjoy food and conversation.

3. Michael O'Neill '82, '83, Tony Caputo '71, Stud Caputo, Marc Westervelt and Kevin Shanahan '70 spend the time together at an alumni and friends event in Paterson hosted by Tom '77, '80 and Dane '94 O'Donovan.

4. Ski Holmstrom '71 and Babette Holmstrom pause while mingling with other UMass Lowell alumni at the second annual Southern Maine Alumni Reception at the home of Chris Filippone '96 and Meghan Makrez.

5. Alumni and friends gather at kayakid in Colorado Springs to discuss enhancing programming in the area. From left: Executive Director of Alumni and Donor Relations Heather Matalin Allen, '96, '08, James DiFerra, Stephanie DiFerra '11, Michelle Hotchkiss, Stephanie Holton '10, Karen St. George '94, '98; Marc McCready; Provost Joseph Hartman, UMass Lowell; Bruce Elund, UMass Lowell alumni at the second annual Southern Maine Alumni Reception at the home of Chris Filippone '96 and Meghan Makrez.

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7. Alumni gather to cheer on the River Hawks baseball team during a doubleheader under the lights at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Ariz.


9. Allen Forte '72 and Tyler Valls '16 may have graduated 60 years apart from each other, but they enjoy celebrating UMass Lowell and St. Patrick’s Day in Florida together.


11. Celebration of Philanthropy honoree gather with Chancellor Jacquie Moloney '75, '92 after the event. From left: Brian Rel '77, Joe McCready; Provost Joseph Hartman, UMass Lowell; Bruce Elund, UMass Lowell alumni at the second annual Southern Maine Alumni Reception at the home of Chris Filippone '96 and Meghan Makrez.

12. At the celebration of 50 Years of Nursing event, 50 nurses were honored. Pictured here celebrating are Assistant Dean Pauline ladlebauchre '74, Dean Emetta Jan Bechtle and Kevin Whitney '86.


14. At the grand reopening of Perry Hall, Barry Perry '58, '59 and members of his family center, are joined by student Massachusetts Life Sciences Center President and CEO Travis McCreary. Pictured: Joseph Hartman, UMass Thacker Mary Burns, Chancellor Moloney '75, '92, Alumni President Marty Meshan '78, state Rep. Tom Golden '93, 1, and Lowell Mayor William Samaras.

15. At the Biological Sciences 50th anniversary celebration, guests check out historical photos. From left: Senior Lab Manager for Biological Sciences Rizhana Bhaiwala, Jeffrey Moore '91, '93, Jennifer Sullivan '91, '93, Sezail Mulyatt '97 and Julie DeZutter '97.


17. From left: Fang Zhang '15, Zoila Gomez '17, From left: Fang Zhang '15, Zoila Gomez '17, Shanahan '70 spend time together at an alumni event, 50 nurses were honored. Pictured here celebrating are Assistant Dean Pauline ladlebauchre '74, Dean Emetta Jan Bechtle and Kevin Whitney '86.

18. Alumni events.

19. Alumni events.

20. Alumni events.

Celebration & Milestones

1. From left: Brian Phillips '75, Dennis Hollis '75, Barry Chomiak '79 and Michael Rappold '74 enjoy some program fun at a Red Sox vs. Phillies game in Philadelphia.

2. Alumni events.

3. Alumni events.

4. Alumni events.

5. Alumni events.
RIVER HAWKS ON ICE

18. Alumni and friends connect at the Model United Nations and International Relations Club Alumni Hockey Night, with proceeds from the event benefiting the program’s activities. From left: Library Systems Administrator Paul Nutter ’06, Associate Director of Academic Services Operations David Dicillo ’94, Emeritus History Professor Dean Bergeron, Stephen Dicillo ’20 and Betsey Dicillo.

19. Bill Finder ’61, Lou Dutro ’88, Dave Damico ’90, ’81, Chancellor Jacquie Moloney ’75, ’92 and Larry Acquarulo ’81 come together at a hockey game to raise donations from alumni for an endowment they created to help UML students achieve success.

20. Joseph and Margaret Herbert ’83 enjoy a visit with Rowdy at the True Blue Hockey Night reception for donors who have given two or more times.

21. Dean Sandra Richmenty, Jim Regina ’18 and Michelle Sibbitts ’01 catch up and cheer on the men’s hockey team at the Manning School of Business hockey night.

22. Claude Marchessault, Joan Marchessault ’00 and retired Prof. Bob Gower cheer on the River Hawks hockey team at the College of Business hockey night.

23. Hugh Pringle ’98, granddaughter Iris, and husband, Mark Comstock, cheer on the River Hawks hockey team at the Zuckerberg College of Business.


25. College of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences alumni, from left, Sarah Lincoln ’15, Thomas Emery ’10 and Fahmina Zaman ’16, show their support for River Hawk hockey during the annual FAHSS appreciation night.


27. Sigma Phi Epsilon brothers Brandon Julier-Guillaume ’16, Robert Mulholland ’15, Max Janes ’18 and Jack Loiz ’15 hit the links for the third annual UMass Lowell and Sigma Phi Epsilon Alumni Association Golf Tournament.


29. Alumni, friends and young alumni cheer on the men’s basketball team as they play against University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

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31. Sigma Phi Epsilon brothers Brandon Julier-Guillaume ’16, Robert Mulholland ’15, Max Janes ’18 and Jack Loiz ’15 hit the links for the third annual UMass Lowell and Sigma Phi Epsilon Alumni Association Golf Tournament.

32. Alumni gather to reconnect and network during the Multicultural Student and Alumni Social. Back row, from left, state Rep. Tom Gallow ’93, ’11, chairman of the Appropriations Committee; Rep. Tom Golden ’93, ’01, chairman of the Massachusetts Legislature’s Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, who played a key role in forging the partnership; Greenbelt Labs CEO Emily Rechert and UML Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation Julie Chen.

33. At the Oak and Iron Brewing Co., from left: Bao Tran ’06, ’15, Zoila Gomez ’00, and Malinda Matovu ’17. Front row, from left: Bao Tran ’06, ’15, Zoila Gomez ’00, and Malinda Matovu ’17.

34. At the Oak and Iron Brewing Co., from left: Bao Tran ’06, ’15, Zoila Gomez ’00, and Malinda Matovu ’17.

35. Macara Yung cheer on the Red Sox.


37. Sigma Phi Epsilon brothers Brandon Julier-Guillaume ’16, Robert Mulholland ’15, Max Janes ’18 and Jack Loiz ’15 hit the links for the third annual UMass Lowell and Sigma Phi Epsilon Alumni Association Golf Tournament.


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Lyon '13 shows her son her River Hawk Pride during the Christopher Neumann '15, Olivia Marshall '17 and Patrick chance for Sean MacLeod '16, Director of Life Safety and The Hawkey Way Homecoming festival provided the and networking.

Alumni and students will gather for the celebration and this important milestone with entertainment, and family fun.

Join alumni and students in giving back to public research universities in the country. They worked as an engineering lab technician at the university from 1966 to 1996. "We had a good bunch of kids," says the now-90-year-old Blood, who worked as an engineering lab technician at the university from 1966 to 1996. “They never seemed too nervous. We’d start them on flat ground so they could get the feel for it and then work up to hills.”

For 12 years, the club hosted an intercollegiate hang gliding meet over Columbus Day weekend in Claremont, N.H. The annual event drew hundreds of competitors from schools across the U.S. and Canada, including MIT, the University of Maryland and even Northern Essex Community College. The hang gliding club was ultimately grounded in 1996 due to liability concerns.

Blood, who lives in Londonderry, N.H., recently loaned a treasure trove of dub-related photos, videos and documents to the UML Libraries Center for Lowell History so that they could be digitized. You can find the collection online at uml.edu/library.
Students are no longer required to take physical education, and there isn’t a hang gliding club on campus for them to test their nerve. But thanks to the university’s Campus Recreation program, today’s students have more opportunities than ever to work out, play a club or intramural sport, or just get out of their comfort zone. The popular Outdoor Adventure Program offers local skydiving, skiing and mountain biking excursions, as well as annual hiking trips to the Grand Canyon (as seen here) and sea kayaking trips to Florida.

“This is a great way for students to recharge and enjoy the outdoors,” says Kevin Scalif ’06, assistant director of the outdoor and bicycle programs, whose mission is to “support the development of healthy, balanced lifestyles for the UML community through outdoor recreation activities.”

Scalif can’t imagine the university ever offering a hang gliding club again, but he and his staff are constantly finding new ways to help students get their blood—and adrenaline—pumping.
October 17-20, 2019

Homecoming Features

- River Hawk Way Homecoming Festival
- Reunion Celebrations for Those with Class Years Ending in “4” or “9”
- Jennifer’s 5K Run/Walk
- Community Service Day
- Live Music
- UML Hockey
- Athlete Alumni Celebrations
- Division I Games
- Parent & Family Reception

Don’t miss this event-packed weekend filled with entertainment, family fun and opportunities to reunite with friends and classmates. Alumni, students, parents, faculty and staff, friends and the community are all invited.

uml.edu/homecoming